

Urgent Threats to Peace for Humanity in the 21st Century

Presented at Peace for Life, a Conference on Wars in the Era of Empire and the Imperative for Just Peace and Solidarity

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Peace is not simply the absence of war. A call for world peace has to take account of the causes of un-peace – these four major contradictions in world of humanity that create violence against the people and the planet. Thus, rather than the usual scoping of developments around the world, allow me to frame my discussion on the major contradictions facing humanity today, plus the contradiction between humanity and the planet. Such broad and comprehensive discussion will still end, as it should, with the discussion on imperialism and the Wars of the Empire being the theme of this conference.

The four major contradictions are:

- a. among the monopoly bourgeoisie – big capitalists and corporations in the developed world versus the oppressed and exploited workers;
- b. imperialism with its puppets versus the oppressed and exploited workers and peoples of the semicolonies,
- c. interimperialist competition and conflict, and
- d. imperialism versus nations and governments asserting independence and seeking socialism.

Add to this the contradiction between humanity and the planet which is being expectedly

instrumentalized by imperialism – for which the masses bear the hardships from climate change, environmental degradation and pandemics.

Interimperialist conflict seems most concerning to the public and may seem to be the principal contradiction today with the ongoing war in Ukraine and the threat of war in the US-China conflict. The looming threat of an international war is principally created by the tools of media and the warmongering and militarism by the states affected by the Ukraine war. In the context of and despite the economic and climate crisis, international war becomes the most concerning to the status quo under the throes of neo-conservatism and reaction.

The masses of the toilers are immediately concerned with their day to day survival. Their suffering and misery are brought about by their exploitation as workers in the industrialized countries who face hunger from wage erosion, unemployment, loss of benefits and social protection and diminishing social services.

For the countries in the imperialist periphery, the masses of workers, peasants, urban semiproletariat and petty traders and employees face worse misery from starvation wages, hand-to-mouth existence as forever unemployed seeking a living in the informal sector. Openly fascist or latent fascist ‘libertarian’ states violently repress the masses who have learned to protest against all forms of oppression from the state who oppress and exploit them and the corporations who take over their resources and exploit their labor.

The fourth major contradiction refers to the severe oppression and exploitation by imperialist powers on the semicolonial countries who all suffer from the efforts of each imperialist country to carve out its sphere of influence to extract more superprofits. This has resulted in the emergence of some progressive and combative governments who lead the efforts of countries in the periphery to counter monopoly capitalist economic, political, military, diplomatic, and socio-cultural domination, oppression and exploitation. Examples of these are Cuba, DPRK, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Iran.

Empire – more vicious as the ageing wolf

The Pentagon has long ago recognized that the US is in its postprimacy decline of its hegemonic rule. More than seventy years since the emergence of the US as the main hegemonic power, or the Empire as it has become commonly called. Twenty years of it was as the sole hegemon since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 but this came to a sudden stop in 2008 in the most severe economic crisis since World War II.

The crisis has lingered to the present and with it the decline of the Empire. This is evidenced principally by its economic standing as its industry and services stagnate and become less competitive, becoming dependent to subcontracting to China and the rest of the Far East but advance to modern industry and technology. But the US holds fast to its remaining power in the military industrial complex, its military global infrastructure and its rentier control of global finance starting with and created by the dollar peg in global financial transactions.

Image [source](#)



Trump launched a trade war against China to shore its political economic defenses but Biden is hard up in revving up US industrial growth and competitiveness to stop its hegemonic decline. The political economic response lies in redefining battle lines in trade and finance and using unilateral (and UN) economic and other sanctions against perceived erring governments and economies. In this sense Taiwan and South Korea are keystones as economic powerhouses and bastions of US semicolonial power. They are being used to encircle China and regain US political economic and military might.

There are many reasons and considerations why the US cannot simply launch a war of aggression -foremost among them being the deep economic crisis it has been suffering from for the past fifteen years.

It can attack specific small semicolonies like Iraq, Afghanistan or Libya, but not Russia nor China. Not even Iran and North Korea whom it has openly identified as the two tips of an 'axis of evil'. Not even Cuba and Venezuela which it has been itching to invade.

Neoconservatives dream of a general or an international war and want to use NATO and other alliances, but the existence of nuclear military capability by its avowed enemies leaves the threat of a US nuclear umbrella stalemated.

Thus the US goads its semicolonies into war or better yet, goads its main enemies into war as it carries out a comprehensive strategy of constriction such as in the case of Russia, Iran and China.

The US alliances with the western imperialists like UK, Germany, France and others in the EU and in the NATO in security matters have been pursuing a policy of dismemberment of the former Soviet Union, turning its republics into semicolonies contrary to the agreement to respect the neutrality of these countries under the Minsk Treaty of 2013.

The objective of this war is to realize the debilitation of Russia under Putin's rule at the expense of the lives of the Ukrainian and Russian masses. It creates the conditions to create more sanctions aided with covert operations such as the bombing of the Nordstream pipeline to hasten the US control of exports of gas and oil supplies for Europe. The escalation of the war through munitions aid and build up, plus the creation of mercenary forces on both sides does not bode well for both Russia and the Ukrainian people while NATO powers sit pretty while directing their war effort.

The western modern imperialist alliance - NATO and G7 - will not agree to an armistice until they themselves suffer the economic and political consequences of their proxy war or when

Putin admits defeat. They may control intergovernmental institutions and processes like the UN, they face sufficient international clamor to end the war from their side.

At its zenith at the turn of the twenty-first century, the Empire tried out a reproachment policy to its erstwhile enemies Russia and China but this soon turned sour - when Putin began asserting against the western imperialist alliance's free-for-all rape of the former republics; and when the US realized that China was fast building up its economic power to challenge US financial and economic hegemony as Japan took too long in its economic recovery. From the depression in 2008 to 2013 major political economic shifts saw the US lose its primacy leading to the emergence of a multipolar world with two new imperialist powers independent of the erstwhile unchallenged Empire and its imperialist alliance.

Russia and China have achieved a level of monopoly capitalist power as imperialists each on their own right but remain hobbled by unevenness in their industrial development, economic system and military capability.

China has achieved a level of diplomatic power as head of the Group of 77 + China as a result of its economic assistance to carve out a sphere of influence in Africa and Asia, while using trade and investments in developing political economic relations with the rest of the world.

Russia has used the historic ties held by the former Soviet Union where revisionism and social-imperialism held sway to establish semicolonial relations with many countries including those who consider themselves socialist. Many of these countries have been targeted by the Empire for subversion, sanctions and invasion even but have been able to assert their independence against the Empire as they depend mainly on Russia and China for support.

The creation of an alternative bloc was attempted in the BRICS conferences. These five demographic/geographic powerhouses (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) are historically regional powers on their own right, are nominally independent to the Western imperialist alliance and can become a global economic and political power bloc of its own. But the Empire moved soon enough in coopting them by creating the G20, besides individually drawing in India, South Africa and Brazil into alliances depending on the nature of the government in power.

For example, India under the communalist conservative BJP government of Modi treads a path of neutrality as an historical ally of the Soviet Union but allies itself with the US against China. It has accepted a US invitation to be part of the QUAD as an economic alliance but balked at being part of an Indopacific security alliance.

The US is forced to create separately the AUKUS security alliance to coordinate imperialist military operations against the 'axis of evil' comprising Iran, China and DPRK including the Pacific seaboard of Russia. The dependent and semicolonial countries are then drawn into this alliance for war - South Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia as well as Japan.

Flashpoints for military build up and intervention include the Senkaku islands, the East China Sea, the Taiwan strait, South China Sea (Spratly and Paracels), and the India-China border. The US is keen to goad DPRK to start the war because it cannot goad Chinese to a senseless war. As it is, the Empire has been subverting China by funding separatists in

HongKong, Taiwan, Xinjiang and Tibet and looking for chinks in China's armor to invade if should China consider military action beyond its internationally recognized borders.

Image: SOUTH CHINA SEA. The Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) transits the South China Sea. Reagan is part of Task Force 70/Carrier Strike Group 5, conducting underway operations in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific. (U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Rawad Madanat)



Thus the West Philippine Sea is an important corridor for US aggression which provides concern and worry to Vietnam and the Philippines. The US wants the Philippines to be its proxy and excuse under the US-RP Mutual Defense Pact to attack China. But the Philippines cannot fight two wars - domestic and international - and so the US dumps all-out support that the AFP needs to smash the CPP/NPA before the Philippines can be a proxy for attacking China. Vietnam faces the similar dilemma because of historical animosities with China though the latter tries to balance its policy of neutrality between US and China.

Equally important is Northeast Asia and the Korean peninsula where the Empire lost its offensive to Korea and China in the Korean War 1952. The armistice is a stalemate to the US war efforts just as the existence of Taiwan as a renegade province of China can be considered a stalemate to the full liberation of Peoples China. The subregion is an economic linchpin of monopoly capital to which the US is heavily invested. The Empire cannot allow the existence of DPRK and Siberia under Russia. But the real target of the Empire, as it has always been, is of course China.

The Orient is now the economic center of the world and can become the center of an inter-imperialist war.

Overall Russia and China act defensively not because they are socialist or have survivals of socialism in their state and system but simply because the Empire is on a warpath. And the US needs war to survive, the US war machine needs war to fuel its military industrial complex. Furthermore, it cannot accept a new imperialist power to carve new spheres of influence - there are no countries left for Russia and China as they are concerned, and the US-western imperialist alliance needs to amass more superprofits to power its recovery.

The call for a revival of the non-aligned movement among dependent countries and semicolonies of imperialism is not necessarily appropriate since what we face is not a cold war between two hegemonic powers. There is no division of the world between two camps of imperialists gearing for a third world war.

What exists is a dying Empire that is seeking wars but is not ready to send its troops to occupy other countries by themselves, note the recent example of Afghanistan. The US

propaganda/media machine is hell bent on portraying Russia as a fascist invader as it also tries to portray China as a totalitarian country from which its people need to be saved. It wants a global inter-imperialist war for profit from as long as the war is not fought in the American heartland, not unlike World War II.

If international conflagration spreads, there are still many levers that exist in international relations and diplomacy that prevent the internationalization of war until these intergovernmental instruments become useless. The multilateral nuclear umbrella is an actual deterrent, unless an irrational process will initiate nuclear war and the end of humanity as we know it.

The international domination, oppression and exploitation by imperialism, which is best exemplified by the Empire with its warmongering and military build up, unilateral sanctions, and military aggression leading to all-out invasion, and more even directed by the Empire at private citizens, is grossly scandalous to the peoples of the world, except for the philistines and neoconservatives especially in the imperialist heartlands.

There is a broad opposition from countries who see the senselessness of the Empire war machine, and the chicanery of the US and other NATO governments over its takeover of the former Soviet republics leading to the escalation of hostilities and the Ukraine war. This opposition needs to link up with the broad public opposition to the war.

On the other hand, we must remember that while international politics, such as alliances and actions may be important, but war is fought within national borders, thus national politics is principal and even fundamental. But national politics must be critically linked to international political action.

Especially for the peoples of the global South, it is urgent to end fascism, call for democracy and economic emancipation, and fight for national liberation from the clutches of imperialism, its TNCs, and its control of the WB/IMF/WTO. Everyone should pay attention to the contradictions in their respective countries, understand how domestic issues play into international conflicts driven by imperialism, and address the struggles of the people in a comprehensive internationalist understanding. Fight narrow patriotism which is reactionary and driven by the bourgeoisie.

The imperialist propaganda for an international war should be met with a clear understanding of the rule of the Empire, that in the Philippines it is a US-BBM terrorist regime to be defeated. In the Orient the Empire is the main enemy as the peoples in these countries also oppose the imperialist subaltern states of Australia and Japan and the puppet states of South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand etc.

There is time to prepare, organize the masses in the unions, the workers associations, the peasant associations, the youth and students, the middle forces like church people, and the petty traders and employees to address their economic demands, link them to the issues of democracy and fascism, and fight foreign interventions and imperialist wars.

For the broad public, we should promote a faith-based ethical just popular propaganda to counter warmongering and war fascist propaganda to counter US-BBM propaganda against China, red-baiting, terrorist labelling against preconceived enemies of the status quo – the so-called ‘free worlds’. We cannot allow the Empire and its puppet states to terrorize us to submission.

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